


Schwarzenegger's Selective Recall

Exclusive: Former California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger is trying to burnish his tarnished image with a new memoir, *Total Recall*. But the "Governator" forgets to include how a mix of Enron's dirty tricks and their exploitation by Republican operatives brought him to power, writes Jim DiEugenio.

By Jim DiEugenio

On Jan. 3, 2011, Arnold Schwarzenegger, the 38th governor of California, left office. But he also left behind many of the same problems of debt and economic malaise that had propelled him into office in 2003 by the unusual route of a gubernatorial recall.

Still, that this former-steroid-abusing-bodybuilder-turned-action-movie-star would have been regarded as a credible choice to head the U.S. state with the largest population and the eighth largest economy in the world is a testament to the craziness of that time. 

It also is a comment on the Republican Party's audacity in teaming up with like-minded corporate chieftains to sabotage Democratic administrations or at least exploit challenges that they face even if that means inflicting suffering on innocent Americans who become collateral damage of the GOP's scorched-earth political warfare.

Thus, there are lessons from Schwarzenegger's strange political career that are relevant to a broader understanding of modern U.S. politics, including the Nov. 6 presidential election which may turn on a similar Republican approach of undercutting President Barack Obama's efforts to revive the national economy and to reap a bitter harvest from high unemployment and discontent over government debt.

Regrettably, Schwarzenegger's memoir, *Total Recall*, sheds little new light on the key elements of the financial and political maneuvering by the crooks at Enron Corp. and their GOP cronies that doomed California Gov. Gray Davis's once-promising career and catapulted Arnold into his starring role as the "Governator" with his stunning wife, Maria Shriver, at his side.

As it turned out, much of what the people of California saw from Schwarzenegger's uplifting persona to his happy marriage was no more real than a Hollywood movie set. After Schwarzenegger left office, Shriver filed to divorce him amid a scandal that he had fathered a child with the family's housekeeper, Mildred Baena.

But more significant to Californians and to American politics is the curious way that Gray Davis was taken out of and Arnold Schwarzenegger was pushed into the Governor's Mansion.

The Real Total Recall

In 2003, California did something that had only happened once before in American history. It held a dual election in which the incumbent governor was removed and a new governor replaced him. Gray Davis was recalled, and Schwarzenegger became the new governor.

What *Total Recall* says about this infamous recall election typifies the selective allotment of facts in the book. And it is very difficult to believe that Schwarzenegger does not know better. In fact, as we will see, it's impossible to believe it.

Schwarzenegger spends all of one page on the actual causes of the recall of Davis. (p. 465) Davis had won a strong victory to first attain the governorship in 1998. But due to the so-called "electricity crisis" of 2000-2001, his popularity plummeted. In addition to power blackouts in certain areas, the enormous amount of money the state had to pay for access to emergency energy caused a momentous budget deficit of over \$35 billion, a state record.

Although *Total Recall* briefly notes most of this, Schwarzenegger does not go into any depth about the causes of the crisis or the politics behind it all. Let us do so here.

The main culprit behind the phony crisis was Enron, the high-flying Houston-based energy-trading company which had been lobbying for a deregulated electricity market in California for years. In fact, in advance, Enron, which specialized in marketing natural gas had purchased an electricity company on the West Coast, Portland Gas and Electric.

But the deregulation bill was not passed under Davis. It was passed under his predecessor, Republican Pete Wilson, a close friend and colleague of Schwarzenegger.

Very few people understood how a deregulated electricity market worked. But since Enron had helped engineer it, the company assigned an employee to find out how it could be rigged to make huge profits for out-of-state companies. The employee, Tim Belden, wrote a long memorandum, actually a pamphlet, on how to do so.

Enron chairman Ken Lay assigned Belden to lead Enron traders in California. At the same time, Lay was bragging to public energy authority David Freeman, an

adviser to Davis, that no matter what California did to control things, Enron would find ways to take advantage of the deregulation system simply because Belden understood the new rules better than anyone.

Get Shorty

What happened in 2000-2001 was perhaps one of the most shocking and nauseating examples of private enterprise raping the common good in modern American history. The blackouts started in early 2000, that is the winter months, which should have been an indicator of how phony the blackouts were because in California much more electricity is consumed in the summer due to overuse of air conditioning.

And as many experts in the field have stated, the blackouts were never about a lack of power. As measured in megawatt-hours, California always generated more electricity than it consumed. The shortages were later revealed to be manmade.

Enron and its allies, like Reliant, joined together in creating schemes to artificially manufacture shortages. They even applied flashy names to these gimmicks, like Death Star and Get Shorty. These schemes included deliberately exporting power out of state and then importing it back into California during a time of crisis, thereby increasing its price.

How were the shortages created? By doing things like overbooking a transmission line so no one else could use it. Belden and his friends even resorted to asking power plants to shut down for hours. At times they would make this request to two or three power plants at once. At the worst moments of the blackouts, kilowatt-hour rates for consumers went up by a factor of eight.

The human cost was also painful. Traffic lights would go down at rush hours, causing traffic accidents. Elevators would stop in mid-floor, so firefighters would have to go to department stores to get people out. Many people simply could not pay their bills and therefore had their homes go dark.

Friends in High Places

Davis finally had to declare a state of emergency, since the cumulative effect of the 38 blackouts was beyond his ability to predict or control. But in January 2001, when he turned to Washington for help in installing federal price limits, he got nothing except criticism.

This was largely because new President George W. Bush was quite friendly with Ken Lay, who was a top contributor to Bush's political career and even loaned a corporate jet to rush Bush's lawyers and operatives around Florida during the recount battle in November 2000.

Vice President Dick Cheney also was an avid promoter of energy deregulation. Cheney actually said California had not *deregulated enough*. This personal coziness allowed Lay to choose the head of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the agency with jurisdiction over interstate electricity sales.

Why do we know that Schwarzenegger has to understand at least some of this, perhaps a lot of it? Because in the summer of 2001, at the height of the crisis when some were telling Davis to forcibly take over power plants by calling out the National Guard Ken Lay flew into Los Angeles and rented a banquet hall at the Peninsula Hotel in Beverly Hills. He invited several influential people to attend his meeting, including former junk bond king Mike Milliken, former mayor of Los Angeles Dick Riordan and a seemingly odd choice actor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

According to journalist Greg Palast and other sources, there were three objectives to the meeting. First, to urge the California Republican power elite to stay the deregulatory course and not join Davis in his call for price caps. Second, to begin to recruit a viable candidate to run for Davis's office in 2002, which is why Riordan and Schwarzenegger were there. The reason for this was not just to oust Davis, but reason number three to negate the impact of a \$9 billion civil suit that Davis and Lt. Gov. Cruz Bustamante had filed.

Since Enron had been using fraudulent accounting practices to conceal its increasingly fragile financial condition and those tricks were unraveling as Enron lurched toward bankruptcy at the end of 2001 the phony California electricity crisis was the company's last hurrah.

In fact, when one public relations officer for the company understood the end was coming, he asked a trading officer how Enron could avoid going bankrupt. The answer was one word: California.

Corporate Pirates

Today, no one knows how much money Enron and its allies pirated out of the state. Estimates range all the way up to \$40 billion. But clearly, the crisis damaged Davis's image and lowered his approval ratings. A man who was once touted as a possible nominee for the Democratic nomination for president was perceived as vulnerable.

For Schwarzenegger to avoid all of these key facts in his memoir makes this part of the book a travesty. But almost all of this information is available in a fine documentary called *Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room*. (To me, that film has more value to it than the entire oeuvre of Schwarzenegger.)

There was another way that the path to the governorship was paved for Arnold by

outside forces. In the book, Arnold says that the recall effort against Davis was a grassroots effort at first. (p. 479) Again, this is not accurate. The recall effort was initiated by rightwing political operatives Howard Kaloogian and Sal Russo with the financial backing of wealthy conservative Rep. Darrell Issa.

Far from being a grassroots effort, the Davis recall effort was really Astroturf, an illusion meant to *appear* to be a grassroots movement but, in reality, is politically motivated and bankrolled by deep pockets. And for Schwarzenegger to still try and disguise this as something else tells us just how candid he is being in the last part of this memoir.

Why did Issa put \$2 million of his own money into the recall? It was not simply to get rid of Davis. It was because Davis was in such an attenuated position, he barely hung on in the 2002 election against a rather weak Republican opponent, that Issa felt he could take the governor's house himself.

But that was not to be. For now came a third way that others would help Arnold on his way to Sacramento. Realizing that this was a prime opportunity that the GOP should not squander, higher-ups from Washington decided to clear the field for the actor. This meant that he should not have any serious Republican opponent in the recall effort.

Clearing Arnold's Path

Therefore, one by one, the GOP candidates with high name recognition and large amounts of cash dropped out: Issa, former baseball commissioner Peter Ueberroth, and investment banker Bill Simon. The only Republican who refused to leave was state senator Tom McClintock, but McClintock was too conservative and weakly financed to pose any real headaches for Schwarzenegger. Understandably, this part of Arnold's ascension to the governorship is not dealt with at all in *Total Recall*.

With the road cleared for him, Schwarzenegger's fame and money executed a rather simple plan for the last months of the recall. Instead of attending a series of candidate debates in California, Schwarzenegger and his wife appeared on high-profile national television shows where he could speak in generalities to people who knew very little about the problems facing the state.

So while appearing on shows like Oprah Winfrey's and Sean Hannity's, Schwarzenegger was viewed by many more people than he would be during the debates, and his positions were not challenged nor his ideas vetted. Arnold only showed up for the very last candidate debate.

Meanwhile, headline writers fell in love with puns related to Schwarzenegger's

famous movies. The anti-Davis drive was called "Total Recall" and Arnold was called the "Governator" after the "Terminator" movies.

Yet, the irony of Schwarzenegger's seven years as governor is that when he left, he had the same problems that Gray Davis did. Arnold had very low approval ratings, exacerbated by a gaping budget deficit and a struggling state economy.

During his administration, Schwarzenegger refused to raise taxes on businesses and the wealthy. For example in 2004-05, he proposed \$4.6 billion in cuts to education and health and human services. (Arianna Huffington, *Fanatics and Fools*, p. 170) He also proposed freezing enrollment in the Healthy Families program which endangered the well being of as many as 100,000 children. (ibid, p. 169) Another way he chose to try and alleviate the budget deficit was borrowing, which only put off the problem, since California's debt service grew and grew.

Selective Recall

To understand Schwarzenegger's failed regime one must read the book carefully for hints of his political opportunism and deceptions. For instance, Schwarzenegger says that when he first came to America in 1968, he watched a debate between Hubert Humphrey and Richard Nixon. He says he liked the things Nixon was saying about free enterprise and opportunity versus what Humphrey was saying about government programs and welfare. (p. 85)

However, there was no Nixon-Humphrey debate between the two in 1968 since Nixon refused to have one. But Arnold's need to insert this false anecdote tells us a lot about him.

The next political statement in the book is his admiration for Ronald Reagan and his economic ideas, which were modeled on the philosophy of Milton Friedman. Schwarzenegger watched each installment of the PBS special about Friedman called *Free to Choose* and then bought copies of the book of the same name to send to his friends.

This is all apropos of how Schwarzenegger excuses the fact that he failed to solve the budget problem. He blames it on the real estate bust of 2007 and the following stock market crash of 2008. (p. 571)

Schwarzenegger then writes that those events were caused by "the federal government which allowed fast and loose subprime mortgage deals. Just as I learned from Milton Friedman, when the federal government meddles in markets, the states pay the price." (p. 571)

Yet, anyone who has studied the subprime crisis knows that these institutions were controlled by the Office of Thrift Supervision (OTS), which was known for

its loose regulatory policies especially during the Bush years.

As James Gilleran, the head of OTS, said in 2001, "Our goal is to allow thrifts to operate with a wide breadth of freedom from regulatory intrusion." (*All the Devils are Here*, by Bethany McLean and Joe Nocera, p. 94) In other words, OTS was giving the thrifts who sold subprime loans just what they wanted: a Friedmanian free hand.

What makes Arnold's statement even more mind-boggling is that the man viewed as the personification of the crisis was Angelo Mozilo, chairman and CEO of Countrywide Financial and founder of IndyMac, two thrifts that championed subprime loans. Both were located in California and both collapsed during Schwarzenegger's governorship.

In other words, the governor could have done something about their predatory practices *before* the collapse of 2007. He had four years to do so. To my knowledge, he did nothing. But further, what then helped cause the stock market crash the following year was the fact that Wall Street piled derivatives on top of these subprime loans, more of the Milton Friedman elixir of deregulation and getting government out of the marketplace.

This free-market frenzy, which had been pushed by Republicans and abetted by some key Democrats, had dismantled Franklin Roosevelt's Glass-Steagall Act, a law that had separated Main Street's commercial banks from Wall Street's investment banks. That wall had been built to prevent the periodic crashes on Wall Street from taking down the banks on Main Street.

However, Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas, a principal advocate for deregulation, got the Commodity Futures Modernization Act through Congress in 2000, thus, exempting derivatives from regulation. So what happened several years later was a chain reaction: weak subprime regulation caused a real estate crash, which then cascaded through the unregulated derivatives into a stock market crash and then into a financial crash that destroyed jobs and bankrupted many municipalities and crushed the budgets of many states.

It is thus ironic that Schwarzenegger describes a meeting with Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson in the city of Stockton about the subprime crisis. (p. 572) Ironic, because Stockton has since gone bankrupt.

Sex Scandal

Almost immediately after stepping down as governor in 2011, Schwarzenegger admitted to Shriver, during a meeting with a marriage counselor, to having fathered a son with his housekeeper, Mildred Baena. This had occurred in 1997, the same year that Christopher, his last son with his wife, was born.

Christopher was born just five days before Mildred gave birth to Joseph. Therefore, the illegitimate child was six years old when Schwarzenegger first ran for the governor's office.

Arnold kept Mildred around the house until his admission at the meeting with the therapist. In interviews and in *Total Recall*, it's clear that the child actually stayed in Arnold's home and played with his legitimate children. (p. 592) The Schwarzenegger family even attended Joseph's christening. The governor secretly paid for Joseph's education, provided jobs for Mildred's sister and mother, and in 2010, the governor helped her buy a four bedroom pool home in Bakersfield. ("Is Arnold Schwarzenegger Still Lying" by A.L. Bardach, *Daily Beast*, 9/30/12)

Maria Shriver finally caught on to who Joseph was in the summer of 2010. Apparently, the resemblance between the two boys born within a week of each other was becoming obvious. Maria confronted Mildred with her suspicions, and Mildred confirmed them. (Bardach, op. cit.) Maria kept this knowledge to herself so that her unfaithful husband could complete his term without being plagued by a huge scandal.

According to author Laurence Leamer, Maria wanted Arnold to continue going to a marriage therapist, but he would not. And although Schwarzenegger says that it was her choice to move out of their mansion, Leamer writes that Maria first asked Arnold to leave. He refused, so she moved to a hotel. The *Los Angeles Times* found out about the separation and began asking questions as to the reason for it.

A statement was issued saying that, after 25 years of marriage, the separation was amicable. But against the therapist's advice, the actual cause was kept secret. In mid-May of 2011, the *LA Times* broke the story about Joseph and Mildred.

As a result of the scandal, Schwarzenegger cancelled more than one movie project he was planning for his comeback to the screen. Instead he decided to inch his way back by doing two bit parts in Sylvester Stallone's *The Expendables* and *The Expendables 2*. He also gave a \$20 million grant to the University of Southern California to create something called the Schwarzenegger Institute for State and Global Policy.

How Arnold Rose

Another part of his reputation-repair strategy is his new book, which as one can deduce from above should actually be called *Selective Recall*. Schwarzenegger is a good storyteller, but he has a tendency not to fill in all the details even when they are important.

Schwarzenegger has had three main occupations in his life: as a bodybuilder, an actor and as governor. His most complete success was probably as the first.

Born just outside of Graz, Austria, Schwarzenegger was the son of a policeman who had served in the Nazi storm troopers during World War II. (But according to famed Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal, there is no evidence that Gustav participated in any German atrocities. See pgs. 366-67)

At a young age, Arnold met Mr. Austria, Kurt Marnul, and was impressed by Marnul's physique, his sports car and his assortment of women. In Graz, Arnold learned more about even greater bodybuilders like the American Steve Reeves and the Englishman Reg Park. Arnold noted that both men had jumped from being bodybuilding champions to movie stars, a paradigm he set for his own life. (p. 31)

After serving a year in the army, he got an offer to run a gym in Munich, West Germany. There he met Franco Columbu, with whom he began training as the two became close friends. Schwarzenegger improved so much in one year that he applied for his first Mr. Universe contest in London in 1966. He did surprisingly well for a 19-year-old, finishing second. The next year, he won the amateur Mr. Universe, becoming the youngest competitor ever to do so.

By 1970, Schwarzenegger had won four Mr. Universe titles, the most ever at that time. He then set his sights on the newly founded Mr. Olympia contest, the Super Bowl for former Mr. Universe winners. The first year he entered, he lost to the great Sergio Oliva. But he subsequently defeated Oliva and then won five Mr. Olympias in a row, a string that set another record for that time.

Building Bodybuilding

Beyond these accomplishments, Schwarzenegger was the first champion to take bodybuilding out of its narrow subculture of local YMCA dungeons. He undertook national tours to promote the sport; he even appeared in prisons; and he was the first bodybuilder to appear on syndicated TV talks shows like Merv Griffin's. One can make a good argument that it was Schwarzenegger who helped found the modern habit of specialized gymnasiums for physical fitness, which has become a hallmark of American cities today.

There were two aspects to this phase of Arnold's life that particularly interested me. Schwarzenegger and other bodybuilders of that era have admitted to using steroids before contests. Their defense is that 1.) Everyone else did it, and 2.) It was legal at the time. But in an interview with Ric Drasin, Steve Davis revealed that everyone he knew took three Dianabol pills per day. Everyone except Arnold. Davis says that Schwarzenegger took four.

Secondly, as Schwarzenegger notes, in the Nineties, the steroid usage got out of control. It was made worse by the introduction of Human Growth Hormone, or HGH. The excessive use of these drugs has made it impossible for bodybuilding to be accepted as an Olympic sport. And it has kept the professional contests confined as a niche sport, since everyone knows by looking at these men that one has to do an immense amount of chemicals to compete.

In fact, a few bodybuilders have died because of this abuse. It got so bad that the late Steve Reeves wrote an open letter to Arnold asking him to join in a crusade to clean up the sport and make it acceptable. There is no record of Arnold replying to this letter or uniting with Reeves to begin the campaign. Yet in *Total Recall*, Schwarzenegger writes that he has worked hard with the International Federation of Bodybuilders (IFBB) to get drugs banned from the sport. (p. 65)

I don't see any evidence of this. For example, each year Schwarzenegger promotes a contest called the Arnold Classic. The competitors there look just as drugged up as in any other professional contest. And this points up another interesting aspect of Schwarzenegger's life: his association with the founders of the IFBB, Joe and (the late) Ben Weider.

The Bosses and Their Star

The Weiders dominated professional bodybuilding for decades. And many people believe that it was this dominance that kept the sport in the shadows and kept bodybuilders earning below poverty wages, while it made the two brothers rich. Joe Weider developed a huge magazine and health supplement business that catered to young men who wanted to emulate champions like Park, Reeves and Schwarzenegger.

But while the Weiders were getting rich, the bodybuilders were making next to nothing. For example, until the mid-Seventies, winning the Mr. Olympia contest netted you about \$1,500. Meanwhile, the pages of Weider's magazines were studded with photos of competing bodybuilders, almost all of whom got nothing in return for their pictures. Weider called them "lazy bastards" and Schwarzenegger echoes that in this book. (see p. 99)

Somehow Schwarzenegger can't see that there was no upside for any of these men to do more than what they did since, with very few exceptions, millionaire Weider was not subsidizing them. Schwarzenegger, of course, was one of the exceptions. Weider subsidized him since he felt that with his humor, charm, quick-wittedness and immense physical potential, Schwarzenegger could advance the sport into the mainstream and therefore increase his company's market share. Weider was correct.

In fact, some commentators have stated that this was the reason that Sergio Oliva was not allowed to compete in the 1971 Olympia in Paris, and why Arnold won the controversial 1972 Olympia contest in Essen, West Germany, over Oliva. Some insiders think these were power plays by Weider that cheated Oliva since Weider did not think that the black Cuban had the popular appeal Arnold did. (In the book, Schwarzenegger glides over the Essen controversy by saying he was not in top shape. See p. 145)

Further, Schwarzenegger fails to mention the fact that Weider has been sued at least twice for taking advantage of these men in the Sixties and Seventies. Weider was first sued by Dave Draper who, prior to Arnold, had done some film appearances in the Sixties. Draper apparently ran out of money and settled for a relatively small sum.

Weider was also sued by Kalman Szkalak, who did not run out of money. This case went to trial and Weider chose to settle it before the jury verdict was returned. An interesting sidelight to the latter case is that Szkalak proposed forming a bodybuilders' union, similar to the one that professional baseball players or football players have.

Reportedly, Arnold originally backed this union idea. But when the Weiders turned all their considerable power against the proposal, Schwarzenegger switched sides. And without him the proposal died. Szkalak was then reportedly blackballed from the sport and forced to file his lawsuit.

An Acting Career

Arnold's transition from bodybuilding to acting was facilitated by the success of the documentary film *Pumping Iron*. Originally, Schwarzenegger was going to retire after the 1974 Mr. Olympia contest. But when producer/director George Butler told him he needed him for the film he was making out of the book *Pumping Iron*, Arnold reconsidered.

This proved a turning point in Arnold's career since the film was both a commercial and critical success. It was this film that brought Schwarzenegger to the attention of the producers of the upcoming film *Conan the Barbarian*, which would make him a star.

Again, I was puzzled by what Arnold left out of this part of the book. The keystone event for the film *Pumping Iron* is the Mr. Olympia contest of 1975. Butler had built his film around the rivalry between the veteran champion Schwarzenegger and the up-and-coming rival, Lou Ferrigno.

Since the contest was held in Pretoria, South Africa, no one thought that Serge Nubret, a black French bodybuilder born in Barbados, would enter. He did try to

enter, but the Weiders turned him away on the charge he had participated in a pornographic film. (Which, as of today, no one has been able to produce.)

Nubret had turned up in the greatest shape of his life and was confident he would beat Arnold. But if he had, the premise of the film would be vitiated. That would hurt Arnold's career and the sport. Many people, including Nubret, felt this was the reason he was at first refused entry. However, two weeks later, he was allowed to enter. But he had lost 12 pounds of muscle and finished a close second to Arnold. To this day, there are some observers, including this author, who believe Nubret should have won.

While waiting for *Pumping Iron* to be released, Schwarzenegger wrote a best-selling book entitled *The Education of a Bodybuilder*; played a supporting role in the film *Stay Hungry*; and gave a controversial interview to author Peter Manso. In the last, he revealed a darker side, which would later surface in his marriage. He said that while in Munich he hung out with hookers and had a girlfriend who was a stripper.

Schwarzenegger also talked about his training partners having group sex with a black female bodybuilder. And that was just for starters. (For the interview, [click here](#).) In furtherance of this part of the governor's personality, two bodybuilders, Rick Wayne and Robby Robinson, have accused Arnold of making racist remarks against black bodybuilders.

Action Hero

For me, the least interesting part of the book was the middle section. Here, Schwarzenegger describes his movie career. What it reveals is that with Arnold, what you see is what you get. His interest in films and screenwriting is about at the level of *Conan the Barbarian* and *The Terminator*: lots of murder and mayhem, tons of physical destruction, cardboard characters, and pretty mindless stories.

When a futuristic android with a computer mind picks an eight-wheel semi to chase a kid on a motor scooter through a city street, you have Arnold's essence: cheap thrills for kids. This has resulted in a career full of, what is for me, ephemera. In fact, one could argue that, next to Steven Spielberg and George Lucas, no one else has played a stronger role in dumbing down the quality of American films as Schwarzenegger has.

Beyond that, there is the problem of Schwarzenegger's acting. In [my discussion](#) of Clint Eastwood's *J. Edgar*, I stated that Eastwood's acting does not approach what real actors, like Gene Hackman and Robert DeNiro, do. Well, oddly enough, when Schwarzenegger started out he was a great admirer of Eastwood's career. (p.

The problem is that Arnold is such a talentless hack that he makes Eastwood look like Laurence Olivier. And he is even worse in comedy than he is as an action hero. In comedy, especially the kind of broad, physical comedy that Schwarzenegger has attempted, one needs to be technically sound and emotionally invested in the character e.g. Kevin Kline, Jack Lemmon, Dustin Hoffman. Compare, for instance, what Kline did in *A Fish Called Wanda*, with Schwarzenegger's amateur night turn in *Kindergarten Cop*.

Because of all this, one of the unintentionally humorous parts of the book is when Arnold describes himself taking acting lessons from Eric Morris. (p. 176) Either Morris is a poor teacher, or Arnold was a poor student. Since Morris taught Jack Nicholson, I tend to believe the latter.

For these reasons, I found it humorously ironic to read the part of the book where the author criticizes a film he was in, *Red Sonja*, by saying it was nominated for three Razzie awards (a kind of reverse Oscar). For what is left out is that, at one time, Arnold held the record for Razzie nominations for a lead actor with eight.

But there is no doubt that Schwarzenegger's financial success as an actor was carefully planned and monitored. He became very well acquainted with how movies were marketed and how studios built up audience anticipation for films. (See pgs. 350-52) And when he became an A list star, he used those tools to ensure that most of his films were successful. And it was the accompanying name recognition that allowed him to take advantage of an unprecedented moment in history to become governor of California.

Yet, for all of its superficial glitz and glamour and entertainment value, the book, at least for me, was disappointing and even disenchanting. For all of his personable attributes and his personal accomplishments, Schwarzenegger comes off as superficial and shallow.

For instance, he said he liked the idea of America pushing back against communism in Vietnam, "so if anybody had asked me, I'd have been for the war." (p. 89) Again, this is incredible. History is now clear that the Vietnam War was not really about communism. It was a war against colonialism by a country which had been dominated for almost a thousand years by the French and Chinese. Vietnam wanted to finally be set free. And to think, Schwarzenegger could write such a thing after being married for 25 years to the niece of John and Robert Kennedy.

Schwarzenegger seems to be not just anti-intellectual, but also ahistorical.

Because of this, he is the perfect movie star and arguably the archetypal politician for the age of decline in which we live.

And this is probably why there was one member of the Kennedy clan who despised Maria Shriver's choice of husband. According to author A. L. Bardach, Jackie Kennedy refused to see any of Arnold's films. She stated, "I loathe everything that man stands for." With good reason.

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Presidential Elections and Armageddon

When some Americans act cavalierly about voting for a President, they ignore a profound responsibility to the world to ensure that the steadiest hand possible is next to the nuclear button. The 50th anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis should be a reminder, says Robert F. Dodge.

By Robert F. Dodge

This week's final presidential debate saw both candidates contemplate the greatest threat we face as the world quietly marked the 50th anniversary of the Cuban missile crisis. During those 12 days, 50 years ago, the world came closer to intentional nuclear annihilation than ever before or since. Yet neither candidate articulated the fact that by their very existence nuclear weapons pose the greatest threat to our survival.

By not mentioning the threat posed by global nuclear stockpiles in excess of 20,000 weapons, of which the U.S. and Russia control over 90 percent, everyone ignored the armed elephant in the room. We worry that Iran may be able to develop a single weapon at some future date totally oblivious to the number of times that the world has narrowly averted disaster from accidental and misread information since the 1962 missile crisis.

It is a matter of sheer luck that we sit here today terrified of a future nuclear Iran, disregarding the reality that each day is one day closer to intentional or accidental nuclear war. Probability experts conclude that such a catastrophe is more likely every day, not less.

Since we choose to own and maintain these arsenals, it is our democratic duty to contemplate how the world and civilization as we know it would end as a result

of nuclear war.

This could come from the effects of nuclear famine stemming from the use of a relatively small percentage of global arsenals causing prompt global climate disruption that cuts food production worldwide and could kill more than a billion people. Alternatively, the effects of a so-called “nuclear winter” resulting from a full-scale nuclear attack would even more disastrously end life as we know it.

So what will we do about the greatest threat we face? Polls show that the people have decided. A majority of Americans and indeed citizens around the world say they want all nuclear weapons abolished. Society pays the price and faces the risk every day of these massive stockpiles and the bloated military budgets that support them and the wars we fight.

And part of the price we pay comes from the competition for precious resources both natural and financial fueling the very conflict around the world that leads to war in the first place. So how will we address this greatest threat? It is not enough to eliminate these stockpiles alone.

As President Kennedy said, “mankind must put an end to war – or war will put an end to us.”

We have the international institutions and diplomatic skills, models and best practices today to resolve conflict without war. What is needed is the collective will and leadership to take this stand. The future of the planet depends on it. The choice is ours.

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Stubborn Treehouse Blockade of Pipeline

Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney has made building the TransCanada pipeline a centerpiece of his campaign, with President Obama mostly trying to finesse the issue. But a treehouse blockade of the pipeline through Texas reflects a determined resistance by environmentalists, writes William Boardman.

By William Boardman

Officially, it seems, the Tar Sands Blockade was supposed to be over in mid-October when the New York *Times*, having ignored the story for weeks, announced that it was a “last-ditch bid” to block a section of the pipeline through Texas.

But Tar Sands Blockade, a grassroots coalition of Texans opposed to the Keystone XL pipeline, is still there, still occupying the treehouse blockade it mounted on Sept. 24, still trying to hold up construction of TransCanada’s \$7 billion pipeline that will bring hot, toxic tar sands oil sludge from Canada for global markets.

Two more people joined the tree-sitters this week, bringing the number of tree blockades to four, as blockaders maneuver in response to TransCanada’s effort to build around the original blockade. One of the new tree-sitters is Cat Ripley, 20, a veteran pipeline protestor who last year helped stop another TransCanada pipeline near Portland, Oregon, when the builders withdrew their permit application.

Presidential candidate Mitt Romney and President Barack Obama both support the Keystone XL pipeline, and both claim that it will contribute to the chimera of American energy independence.

While both candidates are also all but silent on climate change, former U.S. Army chief of staff Gen. Gordon Sullivan and the other ten retired officers of the CNA think tank’s Military Advisory Board say unambiguously: “Climate change is and must be recognized as a threat to our national security.”

Sometimes lost in the details is the basic argument about tapping the Alberta tar sands in Canada, since tar sands oil is much more toxic than oil from previously exploited reserves. Because the Alberta reserve is vast, it’s a significant hedge against oil shortages and has drawn heavy investment from the oil industry, including PetroChina.

Because tar sands oil is so toxic, environmentalists warn against it as James Hansen, director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, wrote in the New York Times last May: “If Canada proceeds, and we do nothing, it will be game over for the climate.”

Resistance Spreads

TransCanada pipeline construction sites offer clear confrontation points in the oil/climate struggle, with resistance growing wherever pipelines have threatened to go lately, whether Nebraska or British Columbia, Vermont or Texas, where the Tar Sands Blockade’s action has entered its second month.

Two days after the *Times* virtual “obituary” on Tar Sands Blockade, more than 50 supporters swarmed the construction site and later posted video of their actions and security reactions. Oct. 15 was the biggest action of the blockade to date, with protesters outnumbering security officers roughly 3-1.

The main purpose of the action was to re-supply the nine tree-sitters, but protesters also disrupted construction for the day, as they ran around the site and some locked themselves to equipment. Dozens more demonstrated against TransCanada from nearby public land, and there were solidarity rallies in Austin and Denton, Texas, as well as Washington, DC, New York City, and San Francisco.

Security officers made some eight arrests and tackled a 70-year-old Cherokee woman, but police violence did not reach earlier levels when officers abused two protesters, a man and a woman, using chokeholds, pepper spray, and tasers, while the pair was chained helplessly to a backhoe.

The Oct. 15 action came after TransCanada had clamped down on the area with police-state tactics, as reported by Firedoglake: “Enlisted off-duty police officers are intimidating, harassing and arresting just about anyone they think is trespassing, even if those people happen to be on property they own. And, officers who are acting as armed henchmen for TransCanada have arrested three journalists in the past twenty-four hours for simply being there to report on resistance to the pipeline construction.”

One of those arrested on Oct. 10 was *Times* reporter Dan Frosch, whose dismissive Oct. 13 story minimized the size and significance of the confrontation while heavily quoting TransCanada spokesmen without balancing views. For example, Frosch quoted the company view that “the company was making sure that work sites were safe, ‘even for those who are breaking the law and trespassing on these locations’,” as if there was no opposing point of view.

The *Times* reporter also reported, as if it were true, the TransCanada claim “that the company was respectful of those people whose land it needed,” when the opposite is easily documented. And for the self-described “paper of record,” Frosch chose to quote only two resigned and passive landowners, rather than any who have been actively resisting on site or in court.

Frosch omitted any mention of his own arrest or the arrest of the photographer with him or the arrests of three other journalists, none of whom were apparently charged. He did mention the arrest of Daryl Hannah and others, but not their excessive bail or over-charging by local authorities.

TransCanada Avoids Direct Confrontation

After its initial sanction of extreme violence against the protesters,

TransCanada has apparently managed to keep its security officers relatively restrained except for the occasional roughing-up or hog-tying. The multi-billion dollar Canadian company's more recent actions have included numerous court suits against landowners and protesters, including a Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation, known as a SLAPP suit, a form of litigation that has been limited by statute in 28 states other than Texas.

The SLAPP suit is a notorious form of legal bad faith, designed not so much to be won (or even taken to trial) by the plaintiffs, but rather to intimidate, silence, censor and exhaust the resources of opponents who are typically, as with environmental groups like the Tar Sands Blockade, incapable of matching the resources of a multi-billion-dollar corporation.

Even before the SLAPP suit, TransCanada had aroused anger among landowners by its use of eminent domain to take control of their land along the pipeline route. Texas law expects eminent domain to be used for a public purpose, and the Texas Supreme Court has ruled similarly in recent cases, but the Texas Railroad Commission continues to allow eminent domain claims based on earlier custom. The question is currently on appeal, but the pipeline construction continues.

The failure of the state of Texas to protect Texas landowners has aroused considerable anger and resentment, as expressed by Edwin Tullos in a letter to the Dallas Morning News: "As a landowner in rural Texas, I find use of the law by a company to override landowners' rights for a profit venture extremely disconcerting.

"The interpreting of the law by state level government officials in this matter demonstrates their intent to use it to void any law protecting private landowners from profit oriented consortiums including foreign companies – as this one is. How secure are we in our homes when the state—not federal—orders our homes seized to assure the profit of their donors?"

TransCanada Harasses Tree-sitters

TransCanada has maintained low-level pressure on the tree-sitters, with round-the-clock security waiting to arrest anyone who might come down and anyone who might try to bring supplies. The company has also maintained floodlights on the treehouses all night, powered by noisy generators, making sleep difficult.

For some reason, TransCanada turned off the lights and generators the night of Oct. 24, according to retired Col. Ann Wright who visited with the tree-sitters without incident.

That same day a Louisiana woman chained herself to the gate of a TransCanada equipment yard, preventing trucks and other heavy equipment from going to work

until sheriff's deputies cut her chains with bolt-cutters and arrested her. Cherri Foytlin, mother of six and wife of an oil-field worker, posted her intentions in advance in a video and on her blog, Bridge The Gulf, acting in solidarity with an another anti-pipeline movement in Canada.

In British Columbia in western Canada, massive and widespread opposition has emerged to try to stop another pipeline intended to bring molten tar sands oil from central Alberta to an oil tanker port in Vancouver on the Puget Sound. On Oct. 22, thousands of people took to the streets of the provincial capital Victoria to make their views known to the provincial legislature and Premier Christy Clark.

Two days later the protest spread across the province as more than 60 local communities joined hands in solidarity against the pipeline plan, with significant media attention

"Eco-anarchists"

An elected official, Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson, called the blockaders names in an Oct. 16 op-ed piece that begins, inaccurately: "I've recently learned that a bunch of out-of-state, self-appointed 'eco-anarchists' think they know better than Texans and have arrived to save us from ourselves. They're trying to block the Keystone Pipeline Gulf Coast Project, the pipeline that's under construction in East Texas that will create thousands of jobs and lessen our dependence on foreign oil."

This provoked a number of hostile letters and comments in opposition in the Dallas Morning *News* and elsewhere around the state. The Tar Sands Blockade is a native Texan effort with supporters from other states.

National mainstream media coverage, like the *Times*, has been spotty and behind the curve: on Oct. 15, the Washington Post "discovered" the three-week old civil disobedience in the treetops; on Oct. 17 an Associated Press report said "a battle is brewing over an unlikely project, an oil pipeline;" and on Oct. 19 the Los Angeles Times reported on 78-year-old Eleanor Fairchild's Oct. 4 arrest (with actress Daryl Hannah) to protest the pipeline's damage to her farm and livelihood.

Regional mainstream media coverage has been somewhat more attentive, with the Fort Worth Weekly running a lengthy, balanced overview piece on Oct. 17. Similarly, regional TV has aired some coverage, but the Tar Sands Blockade of TransCanada's pipeline has apparently not yet been covered by any national TV news network or program.

William Boardman lives in Vermont, where he has produced political satire for

public radio and served as a lay judge.

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From Journalist Robert Parry: If you buy a copy of my new book, *America's Stolen Narrative*, through the Consortiumnews.com Web site, a portion of each sale will go to support our investigative journalism.

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America's Stolen Narrative is subtitled "From Washington and Madison to Nixon, Reagan and the Bushes to Obama." The book's opening chapter challenges the Tea Party misinformation about what the Framers were doing when they scrapped the states'-rights-oriented Articles of Confederation in favor of the Constitution.

The book also reveals new historical evidence showing how Richard Nixon's "win-at-all-cost" political tactics became the playbook for the modern Republican Party and why Democrats have shied away from the hard work of accountability when faced with GOP crimes.

America's Stolen Narrative rewrites the history of the latter years of the Vietnam War and explains why Nixon started his infamous "plumbers" unit, which later got caught at Watergate. The book then traces how Nixon's playbook of dirty tricks was passed down through the years of Ronald Reagan, the Bushes and now the Tea Party.

The survival of Consortiumnews.com is also important to the book because it refers readers to documents that exist at our Web site and, in many cases, no place else in the public domain.

As always, thanks for your support.

Robert Parry

Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories in the 1980s for the Associated Press and Newsweek. He founded Consortiumnews.com in 1995 as the Internet's first investigative magazine. He saw it as a way to combine modern technology and old-fashioned journalism to counter the increasing triviality of the mainstream U.S. news media.
